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SUBJECT: SECI UPDATE MARCH 2005

Summary

1. SECI Center's governing body, the Joint Cooperation Committee (JCC), met on 18 March 2005 in Bucharest for their semi-annual meeting. The agenda of the meeting included the approval of the SECI Center's near-term strategy, election of a General Director, as well as other issues concerning the operations of the Center. While the vote took place, neither candidate for General Director passed the two-thirds majority threshold required. A new election was agreed upon for 16 September 2005. The near-term SECI strategy was adopted with the linkage between SECI and GUUAM (Georgia, Ukraine, Uzbekistan, Azerbaijan and Republic of Moldova) being dropped from the strategy document, with the intention of a graduated SECI phase out from the GUUAM process.

Election with No Winner

2. The JCC meeting on 18 March held the election for General Director but neither candidate received the necessary two-thirds majority (total of eight votes out of twelve) to capture the office. The two candidates, one from Turkey and the other from Bosnia and Herzegovina, went through two rounds of voting on that day, with the same results for both rounds, five votes-Turkish candidate, two votes-Bosnian candidate and five abstentions. The procedure is a secret ballot, with no way of telling which delegation voted for which candidate. Upon the failure of the second ballot the JCC proposed a date for a new election, September 16 2005, which was approved. The deadline for receipt of applications for the post of General Director will be 12 August 2005.

SECI Separation from GUUAM

3. The JCC decided at its meeting on 18 March that the past relationship with the GUUAM project should not only be re-evaluated, but in fact dropped from the strategy document for the SECI Center. After a discussion that included a Moldavian delegation asked for clarification of the motion, it was passed unanimously. In past years, there has been a close link between SECI and the still developing GUUAM process. More recently, there has been a concern with the JCC that GUUAM was taking more and more resources from SECI Center's main focus, Southeast Europe. A recent European Commission document addressed this concern and warned that a separation of SECI from GUUAM should be initiated. In light of this decision, SECI Center will be pursuing a measured decoupling. This decoupling process will involve separating GUUAM and SECI funds, with an administrator from outside SECI solely managing the GUUAM funds.

Donor's Conference in May

4. It was further decided that a donor's conference would be held May 2005 in Bucharest. The participants are scheduled to be the US, EU, Germany, Italy, Japan and UK. SECI intends to prioritize its initiatives and projects from its recently approved strategy document to spark interest in funding from the participating countries. This is the first donor's conference that the SECI Center has sponsored in its history. USG funding already designated for task force projects will be factored into the process, so as not to duplicate funding sources. The success of funding projects designated by the Center will ultimately be the greatest single factor in the success of the newly approved strategy for the SECI Center.

Comment

5. The Joint Cooperation Committee meeting of 18 March had mixed success as it charted a course for the future of the SECI Center. Though it failed to elect a General Director, a new date for elections has been set and there is a renewed commitment among JCC members to put forth a fresh slate of qualified candidates for the September election. The SECI strategy paper was debated and ultimately approved, giving the Center a roadmap for its task forces and the issues that those task forces will tackle in the coming years. Finally, the JCC decided that the work of SECI should be focused in the SECI states and not in points further east, thereby separating the activities in SECI states from those in the GUUAM region.

6.NOTE: This and other SECI related cables are available on
the Bucharest SIPERnet site under - RSO, Law Enforcement.
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